

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T STATE 027031

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAIRO 614 SENT ACTION SECSTATE
FEBRUARY 7TH:

QUOTE S E C R E T CAIRO 614

A;G. 11652: XGDS

TAGSC ETRN US EG

SUBJECCT: VIP AIRCRAFT CONFIGURATION FOR PRESIDENT SADAT

REF: BEIRUT 1353, STATE 23514

1. THUM AND HIS LOCKHEED COLLEAGUES VISITED CAIRO
FEB 5-6 FOLLOWING UP ON KAMAL ADHAM'S REQUEST THAT
LOCKHEED OFFER ASSISTANCE IN CONNECTION WITH EGYPTIAN INTEREST
IN CONFIGURING AN AIRCRAFT FOR PRESIDENT SADAT'S USE.

2. IN INITIAL CALL ON ME, THEY INDICATED ADHAM HAD TOLD
THEM TO GET IN TOUCH WITH ASRAF MARWAN, WHICH HEY WERE
PLANNING TO DO. THEY ASKED IF I HAD ANY INFORMATION
ABOUT EGYPTIAN PLANS FOR CIP ORIENTED AIRCRAFT. I SAID
MARWAN HAD EARLIER TOLD ME OF SUCH AN INTEREST AND HAD
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INDICATED EGYPTIANS WERE PLANNING TO USE ONE OF THEIR
BOEING 707'S NOW UNDERGOING OVERHAUL IN SEATTLE FOR
THIS PURPOSE. I ADDED THAT I DID NOT KNOW WHETHER
EGYPTIANS HAVE ALREADY RAISED MATTER WITH BOEING. I

ALSO PASSED ON SUBSTANCE OF STATE REFTEL.

3. THUM AND HIS COLLEAGUES AGAIN CAME BY TO SEE ME YESTERDAY AFTERNOON TO RELATE THE FOLLOWING: THERE IS CLEARLY DISAGREEMENT WITHIN GOE AS TO WHAT IS WANTED. THEY HAD FIRST MET WITH MARWAN WHO HAD TOLD THEM TO PREPARE PLANS FOR SUCH A VIP AIRCRAFT USING THE BOEING 707 NOW IN SEATTLE. SUCH PLANS WERE NEEDED IMMEDIATELY SO THAT SADAT CAN PERSONALLY INITIAL THEM BEFORE MARWAN LEAVES FOR US ON FEB 25. GOE, ACCORDING MARWAN, WOULD ARRANGE PAYMENT. HE HAD ALSO STRESSED NEED FOR INSTALLATION OF SECURE COMMUNICATIONS IN AIRCRAFT OF THE TYPE IN AIR FORCE ONE. MARWAN HAD THEN ARRANGED THAT THE GROUP MEET WITH MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION NOUH, AVIATION ADVISOR SHAMS AND OTHERS FROM THE MINISTRY OF AVIATION FOR MORE DETAILED DISCUSSIONS.

4. DURING THE LOCKHEED GROUP'S TALKS WITH AVIATION MINISTRY OFFICIALS, THEY WERE TOLD VERY FRANKLY THAT MARWAN'S IDEAS ARE TOO AMBITIOUS. AVIATION MINISTRY WANTS SOMETHING MUCH MORE MODEST THAT MARWAN ENVISAGES. EGYPT HAS NO MONEY TO PAY FOR EXPENSIVE VIP FITTINGS. ACCORDING AVIATION MINISTRY ESTIMATE, PRESIDENTIAL TRAVEL IS NO MORE THAN ABOUT 300 FLYING HOURS PER YEAR, HENCE NO AIRCRAFT DEDICATED FOR THE PRESIDENT'S USE IS NECESSARY. ALL EGYPTIAN COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT ARE BADLY NEEDED FOR REVENUE-GENERATING PURPOSES. THEY SUGGESTED LOCKHEED SHOULD TALK MARWAN OUT OF HIS GRANDIOSE PLANS. AVIATION MINISTRY HAS REPORTEDLY ASKED BOEING TO PREPARE A MODEST "KIT" WHICH CAN QUICKLY BE INSTALLED IN ANY BOEING AS NEEDED. COMMUNICATIONS SHOULD BE LIMITED TO STANDARD AIRCRAFT VARIETY WITHOUT ANY SOPHISTICATED SECURITY GEAR. ALTHOUGH BOEING HAS ALREADY BEEN ASKED TO TENDER ON SUCH A "KIT" AND A BOEING REPRESENTATIVE IS EXPECTED HERE NEXT WEEK TO DISCUSS MATTER WITH AVIATION MINISTRY OFFICIALS, LOCKHEED WAS ALSO INVITED TO SUBMIT A COMPETITIVE BID.

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5. THUM AND HIS COLLEAGUES ARE PUZZLED AND CONFUSED. AVIATION MINISTRY'S STRONG INSISTENCE ON A MODEST "KIT" TYPE INSTALLATION IS A FAR CRY FROM WHAT ADHAM AND MARWAN HAD LED THEM TO BELIEVE. WHILE LOCKHEED CAN SUBMIT TENDER FOR SUCH A "KIT," THUM WAS UNCERTAIN WHETHER THE COMPANY WILL WANT TO MAKE ANY SPECIAL EFFORT IN CONNECTION WITH SO SMALL A JOB. A BALANCING FACTOR WHICH LOCKHEED MUST WEIGH IS THAT DOING SO COULD CONCEIVABLY PAVE THE WAY FOR FUTURE BUSINESS WITH EGYPT WHICH LOCKHEED IS ANXIOUS TO DEVELOP IF AT ALL FEASIBLE.

6. COMMENT: THAT MARWAN AND THE AVIATION MINISTRY SHOULD BE AT ODDS IS NOT SURPRISING. AVIATION MINISTRY

IS KEENLY AWARE OF SHORTAGE OF FUNDS. MARWAN SEEMS
OBLIVIOUS TO THIS PROBLEM AND APPARENTLY EXPECTS
FINANCING TO COME FROM SAUDI ARABIA OR ELSEWHERE. WHEN
I ASKED HIM ABOUT UDHAM'S INVOLVEMENT IN ARRANGING
LOCKHEED GROUP VISIT, HE SAID ADHAM HAD POINTED OUT TO
HIM BOEING COMPANY SIMPLY MAKES AIRCRAFT. LOCKHEEDN ON
THE OTHER HAND, NOT ONLY MAKES AIRCRAFT BUT ALSO
SPECIALIZES ON FITTING ANY AIRCRAFT FOR VIP INTERIORS.
IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, LOCKHEED SEEMED TO HIM THE RIGHT
COMPANY TO PURSUE THE MATTER WITH APPROPRIATE AVIATION
MINISTRY OFFICIALS. MARWAN AND ADHAM HOLD CORRESPONDING
JOBS IN EGYTIAN AND SAUDI GOVERNMENTS AND HAVE COMMON
INTERESTS.

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UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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